

FAMILY TO FAMILY

Family-to-Family was designed in 1992 in consultation with national experts in child welfare. In keeping with the Annie E. Casey Foundations' guiding principles, the framework for the Initiative is grounded in the belief that reforms in family foster care must be focused on a more family-centered approach that is:

1. Tailored to the individual needs of children and their families,
2. Rooted in the child's community or neighborhood,
3. Sensitive to cultural differences, and
4. Able to serve many of the children now placed in group homes and institutions.

Following a site visit in July 2001, St. Louis City was selected as a new Family to Family site. A planning grant was made available to produce a multi-year plan to increase foster care development and support, with the overall goal of helping inner city youth to remain in their communities of origin.

The Family to Family has been an opportunity for St. Louis City to re-conceptualize and re-design Missouri's foster care system to achieve the following new system-wide goals:

1. Develop a network of family foster care that is neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities where the children live;
2. Assure family foster home resources are provided to all children who in fact must be removed from their homes;
3. Reduce reliance on institutional or congregate care (in hospitals, psychiatric centers, correctional facilities, residential treatment programs, and group homes) by meeting the needs of more of the children in those settings through family foster care;
4. Increase the number and quality of foster families to meet projected needs;
5. Reunite children with their families as soon as they can safely be accomplished, based on the children and family's needs, in a timely manner
6. Reduce the lengths of children's stay in out-of-home care; and
7. Decrease the overall number of children coming into out-of-home care.